

said you could just feel the momentum building and the morale improve.

Neil Armstrong was not a very emotional guy, but when he heard that story, he became very emotional, as did Colonel Moe.

That is just one more example of where Neil Armstrong inspired all of us—in this case, a group of Americans who richly deserved and badly needed that inspiration.

Over the years, my family and I have come to know the Armstrong family. Carol Armstrong is still in Cincinnati, a dear friend. We were his neighbors in Cincinnati.

As we have shared stories in the lead-in to the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing, I have been reminded of how extraordinary it was that this towering figure had truly been such a modest, unassuming man despite all the notoriety.

In my view, how he handled the spotlight into which he was thrust said as much about Neil Armstrong as the time he spent on the Moon a half century ago. He was a true hero, but even before he blazed trails through the cosmos, Neil was already contributing to Ohio's rich legacy of pushing the boundaries of flight. He had already served his Nation with bravery and skill on Gemini 8. As a test pilot pushing the envelope, he had strapped himself into terrifying-looking contraptions with gigantic flame-belching engines tied onto huge fuel tanks.

Before he was a test pilot, he distinguished himself through his service to his country as a naval aviator—among other things, flying 78 combat missions over the Korean Peninsula. In one such mission, in fact, he was forced to eject from his plane into enemy territory, holding out long enough, thank God, for the U.S. Marines to locate him and escort him to safety.

For all of these accomplishments, this son of Ohio received the highest honors a grateful nation could bestow: the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal, and the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

God smiled upon Neil Armstrong throughout his extraordinary life. Neil returned the favor by living his life with honor and dignity.

In 2012, Neil returned to the heavens above, this time venturing into the Kingdom of Heaven. I had the honor of being among those who delivered the eulogy at his funeral. Then, as today, I remembered him as a hero and as a friend. He was a humble Midwesterner and a proud Ohioan who believed that the honor of serving his country and meeting great challenges in his own stoic way was all the reward he deserved. He was a refreshing counterweight to the celebrity culture we too often embrace today.

The Apollo mission was many things to many people. To the world, it was mankind's greatest journey to date, a daring sojourn to the crown jewels in the night sky. For Americans, it was an affirmation of America's

exceptionalism, that we could beat the Soviets and respond to their Sputnik Program by following through on President Kennedy's bold vow to land a man on the Moon by the end of the 1960s.

For me, and for thousands of other young boys and girls across Ohio, it was simply the next act in our State's leadership in aviation, done with that quintessential Midwestern resolve and humility.

As Neil once so eloquently said, "The important achievement of Apollo was demonstrating that humanity is not forever chained to this planet and our visions go rather further than that, and our opportunities are unlimited."

Fifty years on, as we look ahead to chart our next voyage to the stars, let us always remember the bravery and patriotism and the humility of Neil, also of his other astronauts—Michael Collins, Buzz Aldrin—and the thousands of men and women who supported them on Earth, and the many courageous astronauts who preceded and followed them. Let the Apollo 11 mission be an example of what our great country can do when we come together to achieve the seemingly impossible.

Let us commit to come together into the future, into the distant horizons. Like the Apollo 11 exhibit exhibiting American leadership and benefiting all of mankind, there is more for us to do. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for votes Nos. 202 and 203. Had I been present, I would have voted nay on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Peter C. Wright to be Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste, Environmental Protection Agency. I would have also voted nay on confirmation of the Wright nomination.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MARIAN SPENCER

• Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great Ohioan and transformational civil rights leader, Marian Spencer. Born in Gallipolis, OH, as the granddaughter of a slave,

Spencer honored her grandfather by dedicating her life to fighting for a more equal and inclusive country. Spencer became a member of the NAACP at the young age of 13 and is best known for leading the fight to integrate Coney Island and its swimming pools in the 1950s.

After graduating from high school, Spencer attended the University of Cincinnati, where she made Cincinnati her adopted home and campaigned to integrate the university's Whites-only college prom. From there, she chaired the education committee of her local NAACP branch and helped raise \$30,000 to desegregate Cincinnati Public Schools, before becoming the chapter's first female president in 1981.

Spencer believed in the power of activism as a means of social change, and her efforts led her to becoming the first African-American woman elected to Cincinnati City Council. Spencer gave a voice to the disenfranchised and underrepresented, and she will be remembered as trailblazer for civil rights, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and the environment.

We lost Marian Spencer this July, but her legacy will live on for generations. Her leadership and progressive ideas had a profound effect on our city, our State, and our Nation, and her work will remain a source of great pride for Ohioans. I am proud to honor Marian Spencer for her contributions to making our country a little freer and a little more just.●

TRIBUTE TO MIKE AND TARI CONROY

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, this week I rise to recognize Mike and Tari Conroy for their impact on Ravalli County and the surrounding areas. Through their work as bluegrass musicians, the Conroys have brought delight to the hearts of their Montanan listeners.

The Conroys' devotion to bluegrass extends beyond their respective playing of the banjo, guitar, and other traditional bluegrass instruments. The events the Conroys take part in, such as celebrating the birthday of a 90-year-old U.S. Army veteran or the closing of an essential Missoula landmark, represent the very best of Montana. It is no surprise that Mr. Conroy is the president of the Montana Bluegrass Association.

Additionally, the Conroys have worked tirelessly to share their love of bluegrass music with their fellow Montanans by organizing the annual Hardtimes Bluegrass Festival, which takes place just south of Hamilton, MT. This festival brings numerous bluegrass bands from the Northwestern United States to perform in Montana. Despite the financial and logistical hurdles, the Conroys are committed to sharing their passion with their fellow Montanans. As the festival enters its 11th year, it has truly become a cultural staple of the Bitterroot.